

*The Congressional Coalition on Adoption*



*Angels  
in Adoption*

A W A R D S 2 0 0 0

*A celebration of those committed  
individuals making a difference  
in the lives of children and families*

*Tuesday, September 26, 2000  
Washington, DC*



*The Congressional Coalition on Adoption  
is a bicameral, non-partisan alliance  
of 150 Members of Congress dedicated  
to improving adoption policy and practice.*

*The purpose of the Coalition is to focus  
public attention on the advantages of adoption  
for all concerned—the child, the biological  
parents and the adoptive parents.*

*Each year, Members of Congress recognize  
those individuals who have made a difference in  
the lives of children and families through adoption,  
and they are called “Angels in Adoption.”*



*Congressional Coalition on Adoption*

*Angels  
in Adoption*

*for the year 2000*

***Congressional Coalition on Adoption  
National Angel in Adoption Awardees***

The Honorable Tom Bliley .....	1
Children's Action Network .....	1
Gail and Larry Cole .....	
Lynette Cole .....	1
Bertha Hott .....	2

***Congressional Coalition on Adoption  
Angel in Adoption Awardees***

<i>Alabama</i>	John Hamilton Carr.....	3
	Judith Smith Crane .....	3
	Anne Forgey .....	3
<i>Alaska</i>	Dawn Crombie .....	3
<i>Arizona</i>	Barbara and Samuel Aubrey .....	4
	John A. Oliver .....	4
	Lori Vandagriff .....	4
<i>Arkansas</i>	Curtis and Margaret Blake .....	4
	Connie Fails .....	4
<i>California</i>	Dr. Frank Alderette and Delia Morales .....	5
	Hillview Acres Children's Home and Foster Family Agency .....	5
	Mark and Sylvia Olvera .....	5
	Walden Family Services .....	6
	Nancy Wang .....	6
<i>Colorado</i>	Clem and Florence Cook .....	6
	Yuri Gorin .....	6
	Mike and Ellie Honeyman .....	7
	Jackie and Tom Washburn .....	7
<i>Delaware</i>	Mary Lou Edgar .....	7
<i>Florida</i>	Florence Gilbert .....	8
	Jesse and Cheryl Parsons .....	8
	Beverly Young.....	8

<i>Georgia</i>	Edward W. (Kip) Klein, III .....	9
<i>Hawaii</i>	Denise and Frank Mazepa .....	9
<i>Idaho</i>	Jolyn Callen .....	9
<i>Illinois</i>	Chuck and Lynn Barkulis .....	10
	Kenneth and Kim Lovelace .....	10
	Annette and Jim McDermott .....	10
	Henry and Odessa McDowell .....	10
	Judy Stigger .....	11
<i>Indiana</i>	Ann and Moses Gray .....	11
<i>Iowa</i>	Jim and Diane Lewis .....	12
	Bambi Schrader.....	12
<i>Kansas</i>	Joe Harvey .....	12
<i>Kentucky</i>	Virginia Sturgeon .....	12
	Martin and Lisa Williams .....	13
<i>Louisiana</i>	Judith Legett .....	13
	Sister Rosario O'Connell .....	13
<i>Maine</i>	Anne Henry .....	14
	Sister Theresa Therrein, LCSW .....	14
<i>Maryland</i>	Lisa A. Olney .....	14
<i>Massachusetts</i>	Dr. Laurie Miller.....	15
	Penny Callan Partridge .....	15
	Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao .....	15
	Nancy Reffsin .....	16
<i>Michigan</i>	Sydney Duncan.....	16
	Mary Ellyn Lambert .....	16
	Jim Rockwell .....	16
	Milton and Julia Smith .....	17
	JoAnne Swanson.....	17
	Craig and Paula Van Dyk .....	17
	Judge Joan E. Young.....	18
<i>Minnesota</i>	Roger Toogood .....	18
	The Witikko Family .....	18
<i>Missouri</i>	Janet Harp .....	18
	Ed and Joan Harter .....	19
	Howard and Rochelle Muchnick .....	19
	Connie Quinn .....	19
	Small World Adoption Foundation/ Brenda Henn and Slava Platonov .....	20
<i>Nebraska</i>	Stuart and Dari Dornan.....	20
	Tammy Nelson .....	20

<i>Nevada</i>	Judge Nancy M. Saitta .....	21
<i>New Hampshire</i>	David Villiotti .....	21
<i>New Jersey</i>	Lawrence and Deborah Andrews .....	21
	Barbara Cohen .....	22
	Joseph Collins .....	22
	Karen Flanagan .....	22
	Ken and Bonnie Moore .....	22
	Jane Nast .....	23
	Mary Hunt Peret .....	23
	Paytra Skelly .....	23
<i>New York</i>	Dr. Jane Aronson .....	23
	Linda and Thomas Bellick .....	24
	Kevin and Eileen Gilligan .....	24
	Frederick Greenman .....	24
	Marie Keller .....	25
	New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc. ....	25
	Paul and Jackie White .....	25
	Barbara and Scott Williams .....	26
	Alan M. Wishnoff and Lisa Smith .....	26
<i>North Dakota</i>	Tammy and Jared Gasal and Family .....	26
<i>Ohio</i>	Mary Malloy .....	26
	Theodore and Lillian Mason .....	27
	Faith and Marvin Smith .....	27
<i>Oklahoma</i>	Jerry and Denise Dillon .....	27
	Debbie Espinosa .....	27
<i>Oregon</i>	Judith Spargo .....	28
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	Barbara Schoener .....	28
<i>Rhode Island</i>	Dennis B. Langley .....	28
<i>South Carolina</i>	Brenda and Anthony Davis .....	29
	Peggy Ewing .....	29
	Tomilee Harding .....	29
	William Brantley Hart .....	30
<i>South Dakota</i>	Jeanine Jones and Andy Browles .....	30
	Dale and Arlene Decker .....	30
	Jeannie French .....	30
	Mark Kelsey and Calla Hogue .....	31
	Jon and Laurie LeBar .....	31
	Judge Merton B. Tice, Jr .....	31
<i>Texas</i>	Kathleen Foster .....	32
	Tom and Mary Alice McCubbins .....	32
	Armando and Lucy Valdes .....	32

<i>Utah</i>	Gerry Simmons.....	32
<i>Vermont</i>	William M. Young.....	33
<i>Virginia</i>	Cathy Harris .....	33
	Brian and Kellie Meehan .....	34
	Sandra F. Silvers .....	34
	WRIC TV 8 and United Methodist Family Services .....	34
<i>Washington</i>	Ivan Day .....	35
	Janice Neilson.....	35
	Jon and Kerri Steeb.....	35
<i>West Virginia</i>	Scott and Faith Merryman .....	35
<i>Wisconsin</i>	Cheri Kainz .....	36
	Lisa Robertson .....	36
<i>Wyoming</i>	Ellen McGee .....	36

## *Congressional Coalition on Adoption*

### *National Angel in Adoption Award*

#### **The Honorable Tom Bliley**

Adoption is not just a policy matter, it's a personal matter for U.S. Representative Tom Bliley. Many years ago, he and his wife made a meaningful decision that changed not only their own lives for the better, but also the lives of two children. While Representative and Chairman are nice, hard-earned titles, they can't measure up to being called Dad. This title may not convey any power, but its meaning is undoubtedly powerful.

As an adoptive parent, Rep. Bliley knows that adoption is not a one-way street. Rather, it is a win-win situation where both the child and the parent benefit. His family's positive adoptive experience has acted as the catalyst to his efforts to help other families share in the opportunity.

Rep. Bliley worked with U.S. Rep. James Oberstar and former U.S. Senators Gordon Humphrey and Lloyd Bentsen to form the Congressional Coalition on Adoption in 1985. During his tenure in Congress, Rep. Bliley has sought to increase adoption awareness among his colleagues and the American people by advocating various adoption initiatives. These measures include tax credits for adoption, adoption awareness promotion, family leave for adoption, formation of the National Adoption Information Center, foster care incentive payments to the States, and aid to orphans and displaced children.

The Coalition will sorely miss the leadership and foresight exhibited by Rep. Bliley. We wish him luck in all of his future endeavors.

#### **Children's Action Network**

Children's Action Network's mission is to harness the power of the media on behalf of children. The organization serves as a clearinghouse for the entertainment industry on children's issues and works with advocacy organizations nationally to promote policies that benefit children. Children's Action Network is currently engaged in a national effort to spotlight the issue of adoption. The purpose of the campaign is to find permanent homes for the more than 117,000 children who are available for adoption. They launched this adoption campaign through a CBS television special called *A Home for the Holidays*, which focused on the joys of adoption. In addition, Children's Action Network helped sponsor an adoption event in June in the U.S. Congress.

Past efforts on behalf of children include the very successful National Immunization Campaign, which resulted in the immunization of more than 175,000 children, as well as the Los Angeles Kids Cafes that have served more than 84,000 meals to hungry children.

#### **Gail and Larry Cole Lynette Cole**

Gail and Larry Cole have devoted their lives to the care of children in need. The Coles have four children, two biological and two adopted. The Coles' love for their adopted daughter Lynette and her brother Sean was so strong, that they were willing to give up everything to provide them with a permanent home. When the Michigan courts refused the adoption because Lynette was of a different race than the Coles, they left their homes, their jobs, everything they knew in search of a place without such barriers.

Inspired by her parents' example, and strengthened by their love, Lynette went on to be crowned Miss USA. She vows to use her title to speak on behalf of those children who were not as fortunate as she.

In addition to their truly inspiring adoption story, the Coles have fostered 127 young girls over the past 15 years. For this reason, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption is pleased to honor Gail and Larry Cole and their daughter Lynette.

**Bertha Holt***Sen. Gordon H. Smith*

In the decades since Bertha Holt and her husband made the choice to open their hearts and home to eight children from Korea, the world of adoption has undergone significant changes. Several of these changes are due in great part to their tremendous example. Mrs. Holt's willingness to challenge the notion that family's love could be confined by national or racial barriers changed the face of adoption in America. Because of her courage and tenacity, hundreds of thousands of children from other countries have found families.

Bertha Holt helped the world to realize that there is no such thing as an "unadoptable" child—there are only "unfound" families. "All children are beautiful when they're loved," said Bertha Holt, a statement which reveals her belief in the preciousness of every child. From this day forward, the organization which bears her name will continue to make the dream of a family a reality for every child. Without her, thousands of disabled and orphaned children would have gone through life never having experienced the healing power of being loved.

There is no way to fully explain the impact this astounding and determined woman had on the lives of children throughout the world. Perhaps the greatest testament of her legacy is that the children whose lives she touched, either indirectly or directly, will remember her as "Grandma." Like a grandmother, she loved them, cared for them and most importantly, she taught them the true meaning of family.

May she rest in peace.

## *Congressional Coalition on Adoption*

*A ngel in A doption A wardees*

*A labama*

### **John Hamilton Carr**

*Rep. Spencer Bachus*

As the original Executive Director of Lifeline, an adoption agency in Birmingham, Mr. Carr has helped in the adoption of more than 700 children since 1981. Parents who received services through his agency well know his dedication to bettering the lives of children. Mr. Carr has also worked to establish a foster care system, maternity homes and crisis pregnancy centers. After dedicating 15 years to helping the children of Alabama, he retired in 1996.

### **Judith Smith Crane**

*Rep. Sonny Callahan*

Judith and her husband fought for a long time to bring a child home from Central Europe. Although they experienced a great number of difficulties with both the adoption process and with officials from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, they maintained a tremendous degree of strength and faith that their efforts would prove successful. In the end, their fortitude paid off and they are now providing a wonderful home for their son, Matthew Brian. Due to their efforts and perseverance, Matthew Brian is now experiencing a rich life in a new community with love from a new family.

### **Anne Forgey**

*Rep. Bud Cramer*

Anne Forgey has made several valuable contributions to the promotion of adoption in Alabama. Over twenty years ago, she and her husband adopted two Vietnamese boys and welcomed them as members of their family. About five years ago, they learned of a Russian girl also in need of a home. Without any hesitation, the Forgey's made her their daughter.

Most recently, the Forgeys became a host family for an 11-year-old girl from Belarus who suffers from continuing radioactive contamination caused by the Chernobyl explosion. Their love and support has helped this young girl through the physical and emotional scars left by this horrifying experience. Mrs. Forgey is truly an inspiration to the entire community. One need only speak with her for a moment to see her overwhelming passion and commitment to bettering the lives of children throughout the world.

*A laska*

### **Dawn Crombie**

*Rep. Don Young*

Dawn Crombie is the proud mother of four beautiful young children, three of which were adopted. Tradition has left her with numerous lessons and examples of what is good and right. As an Athabaskan Native woman, Dawn has a special appreciation for the nature and precious gifts God has given her, in particular, her gracious and caring children.

Likewise, Dawn and her husband, Donald have passed on many of God's gifts to their children. Each day, their children grow surrounded by their love and encouragement. Each night, they rest knowing that they have a family to call their own.

## *A rizona*

### **Barbara and Samuel Aubrey**

*Rep. John Shadegg*

The Aubreys have four biological children, but they have always had a heart for adoption. Barbara Aubrey first learned about adoption through a local TV program. Upon inquiring she learned that the children featured on the program were not only special needs children, but they were also part of a large sibling group who wanted to stay together. After much prayer, the Aubrey's decided to adopt them all. They now have eight children ranging from ages 5–11.

### **John A. Oliver**

*Rep. Ed Pastor*

John A. Oliver has been a distinguished priest for the Diocese of Tucson, but that is only half the story. In both his private and public life, he has demonstrated a deep abiding feeling for those whose opportunities have been limited. He was founder of the Catholic Charities for Diocese of Tucson, which at one time included the City of Phoenix. He set up a very viable adoption agency which continues even to this day.

He is a man endowed with relentless courage, vision and ability. If ever, for a moment, we lose faith in the ability of the nation to find capable leaders under emergency conditions, we need only to remember that men like him come forth to give us leadership.

### **Lori Vandagriff**

*Rep. Jay Dickey*

Lori Vandagriff has helped hundreds of families in the State of Arkansas to be able to adopt children from all over the world. Lori helped a family adopt a baby from Russia and a special needs baby from New York.

Lori has crippling knee problems, however, she never lets that get in the way of helping bring families and babies together. She works tirelessly and always cheerfully to make dreams come true.

## *A rkansas*

### **Curtis and Margaret Blake**

*Sen. Tim Hutchinson*

Curtis and Margaret Blake have been dedicated to the youth of Arkansas, especially those with severe emotional disabilities, for many years. A former police officer and teacher, Curtis and Margaret retired and devoted their lives to the foster children they supported in their home. Working closely with the school system, they have been able to initiate unique interventions and have seen great benefits for the children they serve.

Firm but fair, the Blake's balance rules with nurturing so the children always experience their caring respect. They have been able to touch many children's lives over the years and have been an asset to the Center of Youth and Families in Arkansas.

### **Connie Fails**

*Sen. Blanche Lincoln*

Motivated by their desire to create a loving family, Connie and her husband adopted a one-year-old girl from Korea in 1985. Satisfied that her life as a mother, wife, and a small business owner was now complete, Connie began the process of lovingly integrating her new daughter into the family, home, and community.

Little did she know that another child, this time from Thailand, would join her young family. In late 1992, Connie was approached by friends who had met a physically disabled little girl, whom they told Connie, "just looked like she would be your daughter."

Spurred by the tremendous love and joy she has experienced from adoption, Connie today is an incredibly well-known and tireless advocate of international adoption. Connie serves as the private sector representative to the White House for the Hague Convention and also serves as an international adoption escort, traveling to foreign countries and escorting adoptive children to new homes all across the United States. She has helped many children, particularly disabled children from disadvantaged countries, find safe, permanent and loving homes.

## *California*

### **Dr. Frank Alderette and Delia Morales**

*Rep. Matthew Martinez*

This married couple has proven themselves invaluable not only as educators, but also as adoptive parents. Their 20-year-old son, Andres, was adopted in his youth. Frank and Delia knew early on that Andres was a special education student. Armed with their skills as educators, they fought to ensure that Andres was raised in an environment which addressed his special needs and gave him the love and support he needed to prosper.

They are truly an example for all parents with children with special education needs.

### **Hillview Acres Children's Home and Foster Family Agency**

*Rep. Gary Miller*

Hillview Acres was established in 1929 as a "safe haven" for children who are the casualties of domestic violence, sexual abuse, drug abuse, alcohol abuse and more. A residential facility which houses as many as 50 children at one time, they strive to maintain a "home-like" atmosphere for the children. One of Hillview Acres' main goals is to provide permanency for all children. They do that in three ways: adoption, foster care or reunification with family members.

At the present time they are taking the necessary steps to become an adoption agency, so that in the future they may be able to successfully place the children with qualified families. It is through the hard work and tireless efforts of the dedicated staff at Hillview Acres that many of the children are successfully placed with loving families.

### **Mark and Sylvia Olvera**

*Rep. David Dreier*

Mark and Sylvia Olvera are outstanding individuals who have adopted two children, Garrett, age 8, and Joseph, age 7. Aided by the newly passed Family and Medical Leave Act, both Mark and Sylvia took turns in staying home with the children in the months following their adoption.

To this day, Sylvia maintains a close relationship with her eldest son Garrett's birth mother, who herself had grown up in foster care. Recognizing that Garrett's birth mother never had the love and support she had selflessly made possible for her son, Sylvia volunteered to be her Lamase partner.

This remarkable act of love is only one of the many reflections of why the Olveras are truly worthy of being called *angels*.

## **Walden Family Services**

*Rep. Brian P. Bilbray*

For over 23 years, the staff at Walden Family Services has provided quality care and advocacy services for abused, neglected and at-risk children, as well as children with developmental disabilities.

Unique to many areas, Walden Family Services works within the foster care arena to place children in appropriate environments most suitable for the youth. Often these families are able to adopt these children who otherwise may have been lost in the bureaucratic system of foster care. It is their professional training and experience that has saved the lives of many children and families in San Diego.

In 1999, 70% of the children leaving Walden's care were able to return home, were adopted or emancipated at the age of 18!

## **Nancy Wang**

*Rep. Lynn Woolsey*

Nancy Wang is the pure embodiment of an adoption advocate. Ms. Wang serves as the President of the Redwood Empire Chinese Association. Countless times, she has offered her support to the families in the Sonoma County Families With Children From Asia group, as well as other adoptive families throughout the county.

Whether she is donating her time in the county's schools, such as her year long commitment to "Pleasant Hill Casa Del Bambini" or expanding the RECA to fit its needs, she is a constant help, inspiration, leader, guide and friend. She has been a tremendous advocate for adopted children in the community—raising awareness about the activities of the local adoptive families, their needs and interests. Without her, our children would not have the opportunities to connect with their cultural heritage.

## *Colorado*

## **Clem and Florence Cook**

*Rep. Bob Schaffer*

Married 48 years, Clem and Florence Cook have five children, two biological and three adopted. For over 38 years, the Cooks have provided love, support, guidance and care to children in need of all ages, races and abilities.

In total, the Cooks were foster parents for 111 children. At the same time, they provided daycare to over 200 children. Despite the challenges of raising so many children, the Cooks remained dedicated to making sure that each and every child in their care knew that they were special. The impact that these two very special people had on the lives of the children they served is truly remarkable.

Perhaps the best demonstration of how great of an impact they made is that they were nominated for this award by their adopted son.

## **Yuri Gorin**

*Rep. Joel Hefley*

Yuri Gorin helps answer all questions on the Immigration process for adopted children and provides direction to the Colorado State office to assist in the process of adoption.

Mr. Gori also helped organize an adoption naturalization program for his region. Every year, approximately 125 children under the age of five are naturalized at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. It is the final action for American parents to complete for children born abroad—to become U.S. Citizens.

### ***Mike and Ellie Honeyman***

*Rep. Mark Udall*

Mike and Ellie are the proud parents of seven children (Mike, Dave, Bob, Brenda, Laura, Jani Grace and Sylvie) and grandparents to two grandsons. Five of their seven children are adopted, and three of their children have Down's Syndrome. One of their daughters, Laura, was adopted from Mexico.

Their diverse family is a true representation to the incredible people the Honeymans are. In the case of each of their children with Down's Syndrome, they were selected by the birth parents because of their commitment to children and the loving home they provided for them. As both of their youngest daughters' adoptions were open, the Honeyman's have made sure to help nurture the girl's relationships with their birth families. They are truly an example to us all.

### ***Jackie and Tom Washburn***

*Rep. Tom Tancredo*

The Washburns have already helped give America the safety and security that we all enjoy by serving in the armed forces, and yet they felt they had an even greater calling in life. After the birth of their two biological children, the Washburns were transferred to Georgia, where they "began [their] 20 year journey and wonderful path to 'family.'" Having a degree in Special Education, Mrs. Washburn's skills were called upon by her community as a foster parent for disabled children. Without hesitation, the Washburns opened their home to over 70 foster children!

Inspired by their love for children, the Washburns have adopted 10 children, many with disabilities stemming from either abuse or drugs. When asked to discuss or list the disabilities of their children, they have a difficult time, because of the beauty each one possesses in their eyes. Whether their children cannot see, speak or hear, does not matter to them—what matters is the happiness in their eyes and faces, and the second chance they have all been given in life.

While they acknowledge the sacrifices that they have made in order to care for their children, there is not one shred of regret. "Not everyone is lucky enough to have such a crew of love. We are so blessed by each of our children, I can only smile from deep within when I think of them."

## *Delaware*

### ***Mary Lou Edgar***

*Sen. William V. Roth, Jr.*

As a case manager for Tressler Adoption Services in Delaware, Ms. Edgar works to place children with physical, mental or emotional needs into a loving and secure family. In addition, she serves as the director of Adoptive Families with Information and Support (AFIS), an organization which seeks to provide support for adoptive families. For many years, Ms. Edgar manned an AFIS hotline from her home, offering parents help and support to resolve their children's emotional and behavioral problems.

In addition to all of her professional work in the adoption field, Ms. Edgar and her husband, Daniel, are the parents of five children. Three of her five children are adopted and have various physical challenges.

## Florida

### **Florence Gilbert**

*Rep. Cliff Stearns*

Florence Gilbert, a 78-year-old resident of Marion County, Florida, has been a CASA-Guardian Ad Litem volunteer since November, 1996. In that time, she has advocated for children through four complex cases, one in which the child was reunified with her mother, and another in which the children were adopted. Her two remaining cases are moving toward adoption, due mainly to Mrs. Gilbert's diligence and perseverance. All the while, she worked hard to ensure that the children received the special services they needed.

Mrs. Gilbert has also assisted the Department of Children and Families with their semi-annual adoption picnics, making favors for the children, cajoling her husband into cooking the hot dogs, and recruiting potential adoptive families. Although Mrs. Gilbert is small in stature, not much taller than the children for whom she advocates, she is a giant in her willingness to go the extra mile. At the picnics she wears a funny hat that reads "Miss Flo," so the children can always find her when they need something. To further emphasize the impact she has on the children, a boy she served recently searched her out and called her for support and encouragement.

### **Jesse and Cheryl Parsons**

*Sen. Bob Graham*

The Parson family first came to Senator Graham's attention when their eldest son, Michael, applied for a nomination through Graham's office to the Merchant Marine Academy. In the process of screening him for the nomination, Senator Graham learned that not only had his parents adopted him, but six other children as well. The Parsons are truly *Angels in Adoption*. Michael grew from a very neglected, abused child to a young man who not only received Senator Graham's nomination, but was offered and accepted an appointment to the Merchant Marine Academy. This is high praise to his adoptive parents.

Showered with the same love and support, Michael's siblings have also made great strides. It has been said, time and time again, that having a family can make the greatest difference in the life of a child. Well, the Parsons prove it.

### **Beverly Young**

*Rep. C.W. Bill Young and Rep. George Netthercutt*

Beverly holds the distinction of being responsible for the first international adoption out of the Balkans since the outbreak of war in that region. While with her husband on business, Beverly visited a local orphanage. She was so moved by the number of children living in squalor, she vowed to do all she could to improve their future.

In addition to other efforts, Beverly began her crusade to allow for the international adoption of children in the region. No small task, considering the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has no law that permits international adoption. Through her tireless efforts, a provision has been included in the annual foreign operations appropriations report which emphasizes the need for Federation to enact legislation to expedite the adoption of children from Bosnia, and requires the State Department to assist in this effort.

In April, the strength of her resolve manifested itself. At this time, Beverly stood in a jetport of the Baltimore Washington International Airport watching as the first as the first child from an orphanage in the Balkans came off a plane in the arms of his new father. Thanks to the never-ending tenacity of Beverly, today that boy is no longer resigned to the bleak conditions and future that the Bijela orphanage held for him. Instead, that boy is growing up with love.

*Georgia***Edward W. (Kip) Klein, III***Rep. Johnny Isakson*

Kip is an attorney in Marietta, Georgia, who represented Andy and Nancy Isakson, in the adoption of their two children, Andrew and Isabel. Since 1980, Kip has specialized in representing parents and children, as well as adoption agencies, and has successfully handled hundreds of adoptions bringing families together with children.

As an attorney, there are many other ways that Kip could use his talents, some of which may be thought to be more glamorous or profitable. Yet he chooses to use his skills for those who need him the most—children in need of homes.

*Hawaii***Denise and Frank Mazepa***Sen. Daniel K. Akaka*

For over 12 years, Denise and Frank Mazepa have cared for 70 adopted and foster children, most of whom are from substance abuse backgrounds. Through the years their family has grown. They adopted Erin, age 10; Cari, age 15; and Quinn, age 3; and are in the process of adopting another child. Denise is the birth mother to two sons Todd, age 21, and Corey, age 23, by a previous marriage. They are guardians of another child, Alisha, who has been a part of their household for eight years.

In addition to providing a permanent and loving home for their seven children, the Mazepas care for five foster children at a time. In her spare time, Denise serves as the Vice President of the Hawaii State Foster Parents Association. In every part of their lives, the Mazepas are a shining example of love and selflessness.

*Idaho***Jolyn Callen***Senator Larry Craig*

The Callen family calls it Kaiti's "Gotcha Day." That's the day Jolyn Callen first held her new daughter in Suzhou, China, before bringing Kaiti home to husband Dean and brothers Adam and Ross. It's a day that the Callen family now celebrates every year with feasting, friends and fun. You might also say that day marks the opening of a door that brought Jolyn into a new world of adoption advocacy.

Jolyn is an active volunteer with the CASI Foundation for Children, a nonprofit adoption agency in Boise. She works with adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents, and particularly with a humanitarian aid project that is providing desperately needed supplies for orphanages in China. A recent article she wrote, "China's Forgotten," inspired people across the nation to join that effort.

While Jolyn Callen doesn't see herself as a spokesperson and says she's far more comfortable working in the shadows than standing in a spotlight, her adoption advocacy is helping children halfway around the world to have clothing, blankets, toys—and families. The many people whose lives she has touched already believe she's an *Angel*.

*/ Illinois*

**Chuck and Lynn Barkulis**

*Rep. Thomas W. Ewing*

Chuck and Lynn Barkulis are parents to a large, multi-cultural family of nine children. In addition to their three biological children, Chuck and Lynn have adopted a total of four children and welcomed numerous foster children into their home. Currently, they also care for two foster children under the age of two. The Barkulises have devoted their adult lives to nurturing children and providing a stable and caring home for them. Their continued efforts to provide a loving environment for children of all ages and cultures has touched the lives of many people.

**Kenneth and Kim Lovelace**

*Rep. David Phelps*

Five years ago, Kenneth and Kim Lovelace adopted two little boys, Mick and Roy, who were two of six siblings. Inspired by their faith and the belief that families belong together, they tried unsuccessfully to adopt two more of the children. Though one sibling, Desiray, was legally freed for adoption in June of 1999, the courts refused to allow the Lovelace family to adopt her. Yet, they fought on.

On July 14, 2000, Desiray was adopted into the Lovelace family. They have vowed to continue this fight until they bring this torn family back together. The amount of time, money and travel extensively the Lovelace's have spent in this endeavor is truly remarkable. Their willingness to fight for the rights of children to be in a family is an example to their children and the community at large.

**Annette and Jim McDermott**

*Sen. Richard J. Durbin*

Already the parents of three biological sons, the McDermotts adopted two Haitian half sisters who had been abandoned on a doorstep by their mother. Upon hearing of the children's plight from their pastor, they immediately offered to give them a home. Devoted parents with strong ties to their church and community, the McDermotts are always willing to help their neighbors.

To remind their daughters Gabrielle and Tessie of their heritage, the McDermotts have created the "Haiti Room" which is taking shape featuring brightly colored furniture and artwork. In addition to helping the girls connect with their past, Annette and Jim have given these girls hope for the future. The unselfishness of Annette and Jim with their children is truly remarkable.

**Henry and Odessa McDowell**

*Rep. Jerry Costello*

Several years ago, the McDowell family adopted two children. With room still left in the hearts, they recently made the decision to adopt a sibling group of three. They came to this decision despite the fact that more than doubling the size of their family meant they had to move into a bigger house to accommodate the three new children.

A middle-class family, the McDowells have spared no expense in making a life for their children. To them, there is no cost that could justify the breaking up of a family. Because of their incredible love, their children will grow knowing the true meaning of the word family.

**Judy Stigger***Luis Gutierrez*

Judy Stigger is an adoptive mother of two African American children, ages 19 and 21. With more than 14 years of experience in adoption services, Judy has authored a book, *Coping with Infertility*, and numerous articles in which she shares her personal experiences on adopting transracially. Judy resides in Oak Park and worked for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, before coming to The Cradle in 1996.

Along with her staff of seven licensed counselors, Judy provides hundreds of families with the education, support and guidance needed to adopt children from around the world. The Cradle's International Adoption Program works to find loving adoptive homes in Illinois for orphaned and abandoned children from nearly 30 countries. Judy's experience as an adoption professional have made her a well renowned speaker at conferences and seminars across the country.

Her dedication and the impact she has made in the field of adoption, is best evidenced by the number of adoptive families who maintain contact with Judy—for her friendship and advice—years after an adoption is complete. Without her, hundreds of children would grow old never knowing what it means to be cherished.

*/ ndiana***Ann and Moses Gray***Rep. Julia Carson*

Anne and Moses have been married for 37 years. They have two adopted children, have been foster parents and have housed exchange students from many countries. When they became interested in adoption in the late 60s, not many African-American couples realized the availability of African-American children for adoption and the agencies were not very "user friendly" in those days. Once through the hurdles of adoption themselves, the Grays took on a personal challenge to see that more African-American couples were made aware of the need and the process. They personally coordinated several activities to recruit willing parents for waiting children.

The Gray's were founding members of the State Council on Adoptable Children and the Indian Association for the Rights of Children. They founded Homes for Black Children, an adoption agency and affiliate of the Children's Bureau of Indianapolis, which has been responsible for the permanent placement of over 600 children. They have been involved in helping to start African-American adoption agencies in Arizona, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas and Missouri. They are founding members of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) and the Multicultural Network. Moses currently serves as a member of Black Administrators in Child Welfare, on the NACAC Board, and the Board of the Child Welfare League of America, Children's Bureau of Indianapolis, and Indiana Association for Adoption.

They have discovered an additional benefit of adoption, grandchildren, and are enjoying the role as grandparents tremendously. They have seven grandchildren.

Iowa

**Jim and Diane Lewis***Sen. Charles Grassley*

As special education teachers working in Iowa's public schools, Diane and Jim Lewis saw the need for foster and/or adoptive parents of children with special needs. After having two children, the Lewis' began to consider adoption because they wanted to help children who otherwise may not have a chance to be raised in a loving family. Twenty years ago, they adopted their first child, an infant girl from Korea who had a cleft palate and cognitive disabilities.

Over the next several years, they added to their family many more times and now are the proud parents of 10 beautiful children, eight of whom are adopted. The children now range in age from eight to 27. Of their adopted children, five have special health care needs, two are biological siblings and five are from Korea. In addition to working full time as teachers and raising their 10 children, the Lewis' also have been foster parents to several other children with special needs. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis are truly devoted to making the world a better place for children.

**Bambi Schrader***Rep. Leonard Boswell*

Bambi Schrader has worked as a foster care and adoption recruitment specialist at Youth and Shelter Services in Ames, Iowa for the past eight years. She also is active with KidSake, a statewide coalition dedicated to promoting the adoption of special needs children. Additionally, Bambi and her husband, Dave, recently adopted Anna, a five-year-old who is part Native American. Bambi and Dave also have two biological sons, Matt, age 12, and Zach, age 8.

Kansas

**Joe Harvey***Rep. Jim Ryun*

As the adoptive parents of two children from Romania, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey know first hand the joy that adoption brings to the life of a child. Whenever possible, they share the details of their adoption experience in the hope that it will inspire other prospective adoptive parents to take a chance on a waiting child.

Active in promoting better adoption policy and practice, the Harveys are a true example of how through seemingly small accomplishments one can make a great difference.

Kentucky

**Virginia Sturgeon***Rep. Anne M. Northup*

Virginia Sturgeon is a pioneer in the field of adoption. Throughout her distinguished career, she has given particular attention to the needs of children with special needs. Twenty-nine years ago, she began her as an intern from the University of Kentucky. She moved on to become the adoption specialist in Fayette County. Eight years later, she and a colleague developed a pilot project to place special needs children in adoptive homes. They were given six months to find families for seven children. At the end of the six months, they had found homes for 15 children. With that success, the special needs adoption program began.

Virginia has placed more children than she can recall. When she began as an adoption specialist, she focused on the placement of babies. Through the years, however, she saw a growing need and desire to find homes for children of all ages. Virginia's astounding accomplishments validate the belief that there is no such thing as an "unadoptable child."

### ***Martin and Lisa Williams***

*Rep. Ron Lewis*

Martin and Lisa Williams can truly be described as *Angels in Adoption*. As one of the first couples in their district to adopt a baby orphan girl from The Peoples Republic of China, they have proven that the power in saving a child and becoming a family knows no bounds. Not only are they angels, but their darling baby daughter, Waverly, has proven to be their angel. A thriving two-year-old now, Waverly was once a very malnourished, neglected eleven-pound baby at ten months of age when the Williams adopted her from an orphanage in central China.

The Williams have been very active and vocal in their district in publicizing the plight of orphaned girls in China and to encourage and mentor others in the adoption process. Educating the public about the human rights issues in China has become a top priority in the Williams' life. Their commitment to saving these children from the perils of their homeland has resulted in a countless number of "little angels" being given a new life.

## *Louisiana*

### ***Judith Legett***

*Rep. David Vitter*

Judith Krummel has been involved in adoption issues since the early 1970s. Motivated by her belief that adoption is a better resolution to an unwanted pregnancy than abortion

Judy has contributed to adoption in New Orleans in a number of ways. A majority of her time has been spent with St. Vincent Guild, a Catholic Charity umbrella organization that provides a number of services to women, including counseling, day care and maternity clinics. She has also been actively involved with Early Access, a right to life organization that counsels women facing abortion.

Judy is also the adoptive mother of a son who is 29 and a daughter who is 26. Her daughter is happily married and living in New Orleans with one child.

### ***Sister Rosario O'Connell***

*Sen. Mary Landrieu*

Those who know of Sister Rosario O'Connell and her work to protect abused and neglected children in South Louisiana believe that she truly is an angel on earth. Sister Rosario believes, however, that it is the providence of God that has led her on journey in which selfless people have helped her meet the needs of countless children.

Since arriving in the United States from County Limerick, Ireland, almost half a century ago, Sister Rosario served in Texas and Mississippi as an inner-city teacher, counseled troubled teens and adolescents, and served as a mentor for literally thousands of men, women and children in trouble. But she believes that her true calling came 21 years ago when she established the Louis Infant Crisis Center in Houma, Louisiana, for "children who are in danger and in need of a home away from home."

*(continued)*

Simply stated, “it means that no matter what time of the day or night, your door is open, and you are there to help these precious children,” Sister Rosario says. Licensed to serve up to 22 children ranging in ages from a few months to 10 years old, the Center operated by Sister Rosario and her staff works to restore the body and soul of children whose lives have been shattered by abuse, neglect and abandonment. Sister Rosario says that each member of her staff “has a degree in love, caring, interest and loyalty.” Together, they have saved hundreds of children and helped make it possible for many to be placed into loving families.

## *Maine*

### **Anne Henry**

*Rep. Richard E. Neal*

Anne Henry has worked in the adoption world for 15 years. In 1985, Anne, along with another individual, Suzanne Beebe, founded Today Reunites Yesterday (TRY). Originally created as a support group for those affected by the adoption process, it has since expanded into a nonprofit organization that operates a Resource/Referral Center including an extensive library dealing with adoption. TRY also publishes a bi-monthly newsletter that serves as a tool for education and outreach.

Personally, Ann Henry has been a foster mother and also the adopted mother of five children before beginning her career as a social worker. Her outstanding example and dedication has led to hundreds of children finding homes and provided support to the families who took them in.

### **Sister Theresa Therrein, LCSW**

*Sen. Susan M. Collins*

Through her work at St. Andrew Home’s adoption services, which has placed over 1,600 children in loving homes, Sister Theresa has made a difference in the lives of many Maine families. Adoption placements are far more than a job to her—they are her life’s passion. It is not confined to the work she does in her office, but follows her wherever she goes. She works on building families through adoption when at home, on vacation, in the community and even from her hospital bed.

One couple describes the stress involved with the adoption of their son, born to a teenage birth mother. During the week of the child’s birth, Sister Theresa was unexpectedly hospitalized. Her condition and recuperation period to follow were serious matters. Regardless, she worked from her hospital bed to ensure that everything was taken care of. That is only one example, but typical of the work she has done and the lives she has changed. This same couple adopted a second child through a difficult, “open” adoption arrangement, and once again, Sister Theresa’s involvement made all the difference. They have built their family through adoption, thanks to Sister Theresa’s extraordinary efforts.

## *Maryland*

### **Lisa A. Olney**

*Rep. Roscoe Bartlett*

Mrs. Olney is an Esquire as well as the executive director of her own adoption agency, For the Love of a Child. She has dedicated her time and talents to bringing needy children together with loving families. She truly represents the spirit of the coalition’s efforts to help children from all over the world find loving families. Mrs. Olney unselfishly devotes her time and talents to the betterment of our community.

She and her husband, David, have dedicated their family to uniting children and loving parents, which many times is not an easy task. Because of her, children in orphanages in Russia, India, China and other countries have found loving families in the Frederick area. Many of the children she placed, including her own daughter from Russia, would have been left to die in those orphanages had they not been adopted. For these reasons and many more, Mrs. Olney is truly an unsung hero, deserving of this nomination.

## *Massachusetts*

### **Dr. Laurie Miller**

*Rep. William Delahunt*

Dr. Miller is a pediatrician and the founder and director of the International Adoption Clinic at the Floating Hospital for Children in Boston. She has been a pioneer in the care of internationally adopted children and their families.

The International Adoption Clinic at the Floating Hospital for Children is one of only a few clinics in the United States specializing in the evaluation of medical, developmental and nutritional problems among internationally adopted children. At the International Adoption Clinic, children and their families receive individualized attention and a comprehensive evaluation focused on their special needs.

### **Penny Callan Partridge**

*Rep. John W. Olver*

Ms. Partridge is not only adopted, but she is also an adoptive parent. In Philadelphia, she co-founded Adoption Forum, which has brought together adopted people, birth parents of adoptees, adoptive parents, and other members of the adoption community since 1973. She is a social worker, turned activist, turned poet.

Ms. Partridge's poetry is mostly about her experiences as an adopted person. Through her writing she is able to add a different dimension to many adoption conferences and training workshops. She has even performed one of her poems that had been translated into Korean. Ms. Partridge now has three print collections of her writings, and her poems have also been included in several recent books by other people, including: Joyce Maguire Pavao's *The Family of Adoption*, Adam Pertman's *Adoption Nation*, Karen Evans' *The Lost Daughters of China*, and Nancy Robinson's *Touched by Adoption*.

### **Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao**

*Rep. Michael Capuano*

When one looks at the life and work of Dr. Pavao, it becomes immediately apparent why she was chosen for this award. Dr. Pavao is a member and past Regional Director of the American Adoption Congress (AAC), former board member of the Kinship Alliance in Monterey, California, Council for Equal Rights in Adoption (CERA), and the Open Door Society (ODS) of Massachusetts. She is on the Practice and Ethics Board of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute in N.Y., on the Policy and Education board of adoptive families of America (AFA) in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the board of Adoptive Families Together (AFT) and Boston Children Services in Greater Boston/New England.

Dr. Pavao's willingness to use her skills as a doctor to serve children and families demonstrates what a truly giving person she is. Because of her hard work and dedication, both adoption policy and practice have been improved and thereby, improving the lives of children.

**Nancy Reffsin***Sen. John Kerry*

Nancy Reffsin has worked in the adoption field for 20 years as a domestic and international facilitator, post-placement adoption worker and therapist. In her current capacity as China/Russia program coordinator at the Brightside Adoption Resource Center in West Springfield, Massachusetts, she guides prospective adoptive parents through the often complicated adoption process. Understanding what an emotional and exciting time it is for the adoptive parents, she takes great care to see that they receive all the information and support they need.

Last year, she facilitated nearly 100 adoptions from Russia and China, and provided pre- and post-adoption counseling for parents and newly-adopted children. Nancy Reffsin's work at Brightside has earned the highest accolades from the Center's Director, as well as countless families whose adoptions she has assisted.

*Michigan***Sydney Duncan***Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick*

Sydney Duncan has been a leader in the fight to find permanent homes for African-American children. For years, she has worked to make important changes in policy and practice in African-American adoption. Her 30-year career and the contributions she has made are truly remarkable. Without her efforts, hundreds of children may have grown without ever knowing the love of a family. To this day, she continues to work to ensure that the needs of African-American children in the system are both recognized and protected.

**Mary Ellyn Lambert***Sen. Spencer Abraham*

Mary Ellyn organized the Michigan chapter of Families for Russian and Ukrainian Adoption (FRUA). FRUA is a national group that supports families involved in Eastern European adoption. She held the first meeting of the Michigan chapter in January, 1999. The first organizational meeting resulted in over 100 people in attendance. Today, the chapter has over 110 families from across Michigan.

Mary Ellyn has been responsible for many of the organizational duties of the chapter. She has also become an important resource for Michigan families either exploring adoption from Eastern Europe or dealing with post-adoption issues.

**Jim Rockwell***Sen. Carl Levin*

Mr. Rockwell is the founder of the Adoption Reform Coalition and co-founder of Adoption Knowledge Affiliates. At the age of 74, Mr. Rockwell continues an active leadership roll in the adoption ethics and reform movement. For decades, he and his late wife, Annie, worked to bring better understanding of the plight of all members of the adoption triangle, including the adoption of special needs kids and full sibling groups. Mr. Rockwell has assisted in the crafting of adoption legislation and guidelines with adoption organizations, agencies and state legislators. Adopted into a loving home soon after the death of his mother, Mr. Rockwell, one of 14 siblings, speaks often of the wonderful family who brought him into their home and loved and nurtured him into adulthood. Mr. Rockwell's early outspoken voice—eloquent and vigorous—sparked a widespread and energetic movement in understanding the full range of adoption issues. For his hard work, integrity and perseverance in empowering all members of the adoption triangle, Mr. Rockwell is universally admired and respected in the adoption community. Mr. Rockwell says that one of his greatest gifts was when he reunited with seven of his surviving siblings at the age of 61.

**Milton and Julia Smith***Rep. Vernon J. Ehlers*

Milton and Julia Smith are a strong African American Christian family who have adopted five children: Lola, age 11; Latoya, age 9; Clarence, age 8; Jalin, age 4; Sydney, age 2, and Jared, 18 months. Despite the challenge of raising five children, all under the age of 11, the Smiths somehow find the time to be foster parents to children in need of homes.

The Smiths have been strong advocates for all of their children. They have dealt with many special needs including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, learning disabilities and the challenging effects of children born addicted to cocaine. They have worked closely with counselors, doctors and social workers to provide the best care for the children in their home. The Smith children are involved in church, school and camps throughout the summer.

**JoAnne Swanson***Sen. Carl Levin*

Ms. Swanson's pioneering efforts in reforming adoption is legendary. An invaluable resource to Michigan and the nation, she is credited with positively impacting the lives of thousands of birth and adoptive families across the nation and has significantly aided the movement to increase the adoption of special needs children. Ms. Swanson, birth mother and adoption historian, is also the author of numerous adoption publications, has participated in and convened a number of national and local adoption conferences, and has been invited to present her expert testimony before Committees in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. Ms. Swanson's adoption sensitivities and counseling methods led the judicial system in Michigan to appoint her to the position of Intermediary in cases involving biological and adoptive families in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. For her good works, Ms. Swanson is the recipient of numerous awards and citations from the adoption triangle community.

**Craig and Paula Van Dyk***Rep. Pete Hoekstra*

As a soldier in Vietnam, Craig saw first-hand the devastation and need war brings upon a country. The ravages of war could be seen everywhere, but nowhere were they more evident than in the eyes of the children. Craig and Paula share a love for children and knew that they wanted to raise a family. Adoption had always been a desirable option, and when the opportunity to adopt a baby from Vietnam was presented, they willingly opened their hearts.

The Van Dyk's adopted little Landon in November of 1974 as an eight-month-old baby. He has one older sister, Gretchen, and one younger sister, Megan. Through the years, Landon's love for his family has been strong. He holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and is currently studying for his Master's Degree in business. His long-term goal is to obtain a PhD in Eastern Asian Studies. Landon has traveled extensively, and he has been able to see the world through eyes which have been opened for him by the love and commitment of his parents. They provided for him a strong identity of who he is and what he can be.

As adoptive parents, Craig and Paula have demonstrated a deep love for children and have been an example to all who know them. The devastation of Vietnam will always be a haunting memory, but from chaos came a beautiful baby whose life was forever changed by the love and commitment of two very special people.

**Judge Joan E. Young***Rep. Joe Knollenberg*

For 30 years, Judge Joan Young has worked hard on behalf of children, families and the promotion of adoption. As a young social worker, she fought hard to ensure that the needs of the children she represented were protected.

Today she continues to use her bench to provide children with the love and support of a family. Many who have been to her court comment on the level of personal attention she gives to each case.

*Minnesota***Roger Toogood***Rep. Jim Ramstad*

As Minnesota's "Father Teresa," Roger has dedicated over 27 years of his life to helping children find loving homes, including his very own family. In fact, he received the Republic of Korea's Order of Civil Merit Moran Medal in 1996 for placing 8,000 Korean children in U.S. families.

Roger has been involved in many groups and organizations dedicated to children, including the Minnesota Council for Children in Adoption and Foster Care, the Board of Directors of the Adoption Resource Exchange of North America, the North American Center on Adoption, the Minnesota Task Force on Improving Minnesota Laws Relating to Adoption and Pregnancy Counseling Services, and the Children's Action Coalition on Funding for Adoptive Study Costs for Children with Special Needs.

While Roger has officially retired, his involvement in these important activities continues.

**The Witikko Family***Rep. Jim Oberstar*

By their example, the Witikko family has demonstrated how one family can make a difference in the life of a child. Not only did the Witikko family adopt their son, Xavier, from Romania, but they have also been strong advocates for adoption tax credit legislation.

Knowing that sometimes cost can be a barrier to children finding a permanent and loving home, the Witikko's have used their personal story as an example of what adoption can mean in the life of a child.

*Missouri***Janet Harp***Sen. John Ashcroft*

The Harps were approved as foster parents in June of 1990, and their sole goal was to provide temporary care to babies who could not remain at home with their parents. The Harps have seen more than 80 children come and go from their home. David was the Harp's first foster placement. After an unsuccessful return to his mother and six years of working on his case, the Harps adopted David. Three years later, they decided to adopt a second child, Tess. Both Tess and David, have special needs and challenges which the Harps accept lovingly.

Janet and her husband have had the opportunity to adopt four other infants in their care. Although they dearly loved each one of them, they said no. Wanting the best home for them, they helped select the adoptive home for each one of these children and have spent hours doing pre-placement visits to help

the children and new families adjust. While the Harps grieve a loss, they look past it and see the joy in the eyes and laughter of the adoptive family. They are exceedingly supportive and in all instances, have maintained a close relationship with all of these families and children.

### ***Ed and Joan Harter***

*Sen. Christopher Bond*

Having both grown up in large families, Ed and Joan Harter have always wanted children. When Joan and Ed were not blessed with children naturally, they began exploring options in adoption. Their adoptive son, Michael, came into their lives as an infant five years ago, and their long awaited family was underway. About 18 months ago, Benjamin, joined the Harter household as a foster child. He was officially adopted this past month, just after celebrating his second birthday. The most recent addition to the Harter family, a three-day-old girl named Nettie, came to live with the Harters as a foster child this spring.

Both boys are delighted with their little “sister” and hope that she, too, will soon be a permanent addition. The Harters are wonderful examples of patient, caring parents who overcame bureaucratic hurdles to achieve their family. They continually reach out to serve the needs of children, whether by advocating for reform, supporting a fellow foster parent, or in giving one of their children a hug. They are truly *Angels*.

### ***Howard and Rochelle Muchnick***

*Rep. James M. Talent*

Howard and Rochelle Muchnick are a St. Louis couple and the proud parents of two adopted children. Every summer, Small World Adoption Foundation, the adoption agency they used, sponsors a summer picnic in St. Louis for families who have adopted through Small World from around the country. Approximately 750 people attend this picnic each summer.

For two years in a row, Howard and Rochelle Muchnick have, almost single-handedly, made all arrangements for this picnic, which includes swimming, full lunch, beverages, snacks, pony rides, air bouncers, clowns and magic shows. Their hard work and dedication makes it possible for adopted children and their families to revel in their shared experience. Because of them, hundreds of children will grow knowing that others have found their families through adoption.

### ***Connie Quinn***

*Rep. Roy Blunt*

Connie and her husband, James, are the proud parents of four adopted children, all of whom came into their lives under different circumstances, but all for the same reason—they were in need of a loving home. In addition, the Quinns are foster parents to a three-year-old and a 14-year-old. Still with room in their hearts for more, they are considering the adoption of the teen and reuniting their three-year-old foster child with her siblings, should they become available.

As foster and adoptive parents, the Quinns have seen it all. Their work with the agency as well as with raising their own children has been filled with as many highs as lows. As foster parents, they have witnessed the impact of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. Through it all, the family has strived to find the positive in any situation. Connie provides her family with endless hours of support, guidance and understanding.

### ***Small World Adoption Foundation/Brenda Henn and Slava Plotonov***

*Sen. Christopher Bond*

For more than six years, Brenda and Slava have dedicated themselves to literally saving children's lives. They accomplish this great task by arranging adoptions from impoverished Eastern European orphanages into loving families in the United States. To date, they have assisted in placing over 650 children with families throughout the U.S., over 300 in Missouri alone. Their passion and dedication toward this end is unparalleled and deserves the highest recognition and praise.

In 1993, Brenda and Slava founded Small World Adoption Foundation as a nonprofit organization. As a result of this effort, they have raised thousands of dollars in cash donations via fund raisers as well as accumulating hundreds of thousands worth of relief items (baby formula, diapers etc.) all sent to the orphanages of Eastern Europe.

### *Nebraska*

### ***Stuart and Dari Dornan***

*Sen. Chuck Hagel*

The Dornans have shown great concern and involvement for the issue of adoption. Already having four biological children, the Dornans agreed to adopt two Romanian children. Despite the daily challenges of a large family, they still manage to provide a loving, nurturing environment for all six children.

Outside their home, the Dornans have promoted adoption through their involvement with Adoption Links Worldwide. Whenever possible, they speak to potential adopters and relate their own story of how adoption changed their lives. The Dornans have also worked with other adoptive parents providing support for those may have difficulty with their own adoptive children.

### ***Tammy Nelson***

*Rep. Bill Barrett*

Tammy lives with her husband, Jeff, and nine boys. They have two adopted sons, three foster sons, three guardianship sons and one biological son.

Tammy is the Southwest Service Area Representative on the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. Tammy was also recommended highly by the Southwest Service Area staff to be the co-trainer of the Health and Human Services "Making the Commitment to Adoption" training. Since the beginning of the year 2000, Tammy has helped co-train hundreds of prospective adoptive parents for the State of Nebraska.

By sharing her wealth of experience in parenting adoptive children, she has given real insight for prospective adoptive parents. She is a strong advocate for the State of Nebraska Adoptive Parent Program and expresses this enthusiastically in a positive manner.

## *Nevada*

### **Judge Nancy M. Saitta**

*Rep. Shelley Berkley*

The number of ways in which Judge Nancy Saitta advocates on behalf of adopted children and their families is astonishing. In 1996, she developed the Annual Nevada Adoption Fair. In addition, Judge Saitta has written and lobbied for several adoption-related bills in the Nevada State Legislature. These bills address the disclosure of information regarding adoption, the use of state resources for special needs children, and protective legislation for children who reside in homes where there is or has been domestic violence. In 1999 and 2000, Judge Saitta co-sponsored the Children's Attorney Project (CAP). CAP is a program that provides specially-trained attorneys to represent abused and neglected children in Family Court proceedings.

Judge Saitta also coordinated the local presentation and spearheaded a collection drive of the U.S. Postal Service's Adoption Stamp. She worked with Cox Cable to showcase each of the children available for adoption in Nevada. It airs over 100 times in Nevada markets and via the Internet.

Before becoming a judge, Judge Saitta served as a Children's Advocate for the State of Nevada's Office of the Attorney General. As an advocate, she pursued prompt prosecution of child protection cases and created priority hearings for termination of parental rights for victimized children.

## *New Hampshire*

### **David Villiotti**

*Sen. Bob Smith*

Dave's mission is providing care and support to the neediest children and families, thus strengthening individuals, families and communities. Dave has worked tirelessly to assist "his" children to be reunited with their biological families, or if necessary, to be placed in foster care or adopted to caring families. His work has resulted in countless children finding the love and security that having a family provides.

When Dave first began work at the Nashua children's home 15 years ago, there were 18 children in residence. Now there are 46. Dave continues to provide support to families which will allow children to grow up in an environment which is nurturing, protective and enriching to their lives.

## *New Jersey*

### **Lawrence and Deborah Andrews**

*Rep. Rush Holt*

Mr. and Mrs. Andrews have adopted two children and currently have a foster child in their care. In July, the Andrews completed adoption proceedings for their daughter, who they have raised since she was two months old. Both Mr. and Mrs. Andrews belong to the New Jersey Foster Parent Association.

Mrs. Andrews has served as the Vice President of the Monmouth County Foster Parent Association for the past six years. Her primary role is to organize the holiday party each year, which requires setting up "giving trees" and collecting gifts for the children from nearby businesses and individuals throughout the community. The Andrews also make themselves readily available to speak with potential foster parents to share the experiences they have had thus far. Because of their willingness to share their experiences, many have been inspired to open their hearts and homes to a foster child.

**Barbara Cohen***Rep. Bob Franks*

Ms. Cohen is an adopted woman whose second child died from multiple anomalies of the brain at age four. Family physicians were frustrated by Ms. Cohen's inability to provide her family medical history. Not wanting her future children to suffer the same fate, Ms. Cohen started searching for her birth family in the early 1980s. Upon locating her family medical history, Ms. Cohen learned that many children on her mother's side died from the same disease—a genetic mutation traced back to the time of the potato famine in Ireland.

Ms. Cohen continues to work with adopted individuals, adoptive parents and birth parents in New Jersey to educate the public about the need for accurate and updated medical history for adopted individuals in the United States. She volunteered in this capacity since the early 1980s and eventually abandoned her other professions to completely dedicate herself to this cause. In addition to all of the adoption activities, she has also served as the American Adoption Congress' (AAC) New Jersey State Representative. Currently, Ms. Cohen is the AAC's Regional Director, responsible for communicating and working with all of the ACC's state representatives in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia and Washington, D.C.

**Joseph Collins***Sen. Robert Torricelli*

Joe Collins is a specialized private detective who devotes the majority of his time helping adopted children find their natural mothers. He has successfully reunited more than three hundred families. Many times, he takes these cases on pro bono. Most recently, as seen in a feature article in the *New Jersey Star Ledger*, Joe Collins reunited twin sisters that had been separated for 46 years. He did this work completely free of charge.

Jane Nast, a member of the American Adoption Congress, calls Mr. Collins's work "invaluable." He is such a pleasure to work with and to just be around, and she says that as far as she is concerned, "Joe is an angel." Because of his work, hundreds of adoptees have been able to find the answers they have dreamed of their whole lives.

**Karen Flanagan***Rep. Bob Franks*

Ms. Flanagan is a Baby Worker, Certified Social Worker, and has been an employee with the United Family and Children's Society for over 20 years. In this role, she provides guidance and support for foster parents caring for children who are waiting to be placed in their permanent adoptive homes. She does all that she can to assure that these precious children are given the medical and emotional attention they need and deserve.

Ms. Flanagan is also the person who introduces the parents to their new additions. Recognizing what a critical role foster parents play in the lives of children in need of homes, Ms. Flanagan has dedicated her life to making a positive impact on the lives of the children and their families.

**Ken and Bonnie Moore***Rep. Frank LoBiondo*

For 10 years, Kenneth and Bonnie Moore tried unsuccessfully to adopt a child from the U.S. before beginning a search overseas. Today, they are proud parents of three 10-year-old girls—twins from Thailand (Abbey Sands Moore and Melissa Wren Moore) and a little girl from Guatemala (Kenna Roisin Moore).

Under the Moore's care, these young girls have come a long way—two are aspiring actresses, enjoying time at drama summer camps. Young Kenna takes weekly dance lessons and is frequently featured in recitals.

Bonnie and Ken have given much of themselves in the interest of making a life for these little girls. Now they help others in the community who are having trouble adopting. Inspired by their example and under their guidance, countless parents have opened their hearts to the miracle of adoption.

### **Jane Nast**

*Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen*

Mrs. Nast is a former educator who, along with her husband, David W., adopted two children. The success of these adoptions led Mrs. Nast to become involved in the adoption reform movement. She currently serves as the president of the American Adoption Congress. As an outspoken and articulate advocate on behalf of adoption reform, Mrs. Nast has worked to make the adoption process more open and to reunite birth parents with their adopted children and the adoptive families.

### **Mary Hunt Peret**

*Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.*

Mary is the Program Director for the Terminal Illness Emergency Search (T.I.E.S.). T.I.E.S. is a volunteer-run, nonprofit organization with the mission of providing free and timely search services and support for terminally ill adult adoptees and birth parents. Adoptees and birth parents can be put in touch with biological family members when organ or bone marrow transplants are needed. In addition, it provides terminally ill birth parents with searches so they can notify their children of their potential health concerns. Because of her caring, hard work and devotion, countless people have been helped.

### **Paytra Skelly**

*Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg*

Paytra was adopted from Germany by her family at five months old. She has used her experience in finding her birth mother to help others find their birth family members.

Paytra has done a remarkable job in promoting adoption efforts. Five years ago she founded an organization devoted to raising funds to help adopted adults and members of their birth family meet when in-person reunions are not possible.

## *New York*

### **Dr. Jane Aronson**

*Rep. Jerrold Nadler*

In 1993, Dr. Aronson founded the International Adoption Medical Services, a clinic at the Winthrop-University Hospital in Mineola, New York. The clinic offers a wide spectrum of services, from pre-adoption consultations to psychological treatment for adopted children traumatized in foreign institutions. She has been committed to candidly advising prospective parents about coping with the mental and physical health problems their children may have developed in overseas orphanages.

As a leader in the expansion of medical adoption consultation, Dr. Aronson made seven trips abroad to Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and China. Building on her research there, she launched the Orphan Rangers in 1997. The program consists of graduate students and medical experts who visit foreign orphanages, observing conditions and offering treatment.

For the past six years, Dr. Aronson has been a medical consultant for the Spence-Chapin agency and is in the process of adopting her first child.

**Linda and Thomas Bellick***Rep. Michael R. McNulty*

Linda has a cartoon tacked to her wall which depicts an adoptive mother talking to her child: "Other children grew in their mommy's tummy, but you are special, you grew in my heart."

Linda and Tom have dedicated themselves to increasing community appreciation for the many foster and adoptive parents in Schenectady County who care for and, in many cases, adopt children with special needs. Each day, they work to break down the barriers which prevent children from finding permanent homes and take steps toward building a more streamlined system of child protection. The Bellick's public awareness campaigns have helped the people of Schenectady identify those in the community who have room in their homes and hearts for a waiting child.

In the 10 years they have been foster parents, they have welcomed more than 60 children from a variety of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds into their home. For many years, they cared for six or seven children at the same time. Linda and Tom have adopted three of these children—Tyler, age 9, and natural brothers Michael, age 8, and Daniel, age 6. Through their love and dedication, Tom and Linda have helped children find what they need most, a loving home.

**Kevin and Eileen Gilligan***Rep. James T. Walsh*

The Gilligans have adopted three children, ranging in age from four to 13. All three children were rescued from orphanages in foreign countries as babies. As parents, they have made a profound difference in the lives of their three children; and they continue to make a difference for other needy children.

Recently, following the adoption of their youngest child, Kevin wrote a series of articles for the Syracuse newspapers about the trip he and Eileen made to Russia. He intends to give the story to his young son one day. These articles display the dedication necessary in the adoption process. Because of his willingness to share this intimate part of his life, countless others have been inspired to open their hearts and homes to a waiting child.

**Frederick Greenman***Rep. Carolyn Maloney*

As a birth father, his personal experience with the adoption system led Fred Greenman to dedicate his time and legal expertise to helping reunite birth parents with their children. In 1991 his daughter, who had been given up for adoption in 1960, sought him out, and they enjoy a continuing relationship that has been extremely beneficial for both of them. Since then, Mr. Greenman has dedicated his time to fighting to remove barriers that prevent adoptive children from discovering their roots.

In 1995, Mr. Greenman offered his services to the New Jersey legislature in passing an open records law. Since then, he has worked pro bono as a legal counsel for the American Adoption Congress. He was instrumental in supporting attorneys in Tennessee and Oregon when those states passed statutes allowing adopted children to have access to some of their original records, including birth certificates. In fact, he served as one of the attorneys for the amici curiae filed supporting the Tennessee adoption law in *Doe v. Sundquist*.

Most recently, Mr. Greenman was instrumental in educating members of Congress to the need for passage of thoughtful legislation to implement the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption. Fred Greenman has given his wisdom, his counsel, his compassion and his time to those who want to permit adoptive children to discover from where they have come.

**Marie Keller***Rep. Sue W. Kelly*

Whether it is in the life of a child or in the community which surrounds her, Marie Keller has made a difference through adoption. As a volunteer, she writes, edits and publishes a quarterly newsletter for New York Families for Russian Ukrainian Adoption. Recently, she and her family hosted a “barbecue” in Yorktown Heights for a visiting group of high-ranking Russian adoption officials traveling under the auspices of the State Department.

A simple story shows how she continues to make a difference. She and her husband are the proud parents of Beatrice and Roland, adopted in 1994 from Novocherkassk, Russia. Because of this connection, they offered to host six-year-old Aleksey Shushanov from Vargashan Orphanage in Kurgan, Russia as part of the Bridge of Hope Summer Camp for Russian Orphans. If all goes well, Aleksey Shushanov will be Aleksey Naumann of Yorktown Heights by Christmas.

**New York State Citizens’ Coalition for Children, Inc.***Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey*

Since its inception in 1975, the New York State Citizens’ Coalition for Children (the Coalition) has supported both adoptive and foster families, while providing a voice for children in need of permanency. The Coalition serves as a resource to New York State’s prospective and current adoptive and foster parents by providing an array of training, educational, informational and referral services. Most notable is the Coalition’s greatly attended and highly influential annual statewide adoption training conference. At this event, both national and New York State adoption experts assist adoptive and foster parents with the struggles of adoption and offer advice on current and enduring adoption issues.

In addition, the Coalition’s “CoalitioNet” initiative was responsible for awarding sub-grants and fully configured laptop computers to more than 20 adoptive and foster parent groups throughout the state, enabling them to implement the much needed recruitment, educational and support projects. Thanks to the “CoalitioNet” project, since 1997, 26 children have found adoptive families in New York State.

The Coalition was instrumental in the development of many of New York State’s “firsts,” including the first adoptive and foster parent group for lesbians and gay men, and the first Native American parent group. The work of the Coalition is so inspiring that they now collaborate with advocates of more than 13 states to develop a similar strategy of statewide networks. The Coalition is constantly striving to expand and improve in order to better serve New York’s children in waiting and adoptive foster families.

**Paul and Jackie White***Rep. Louise M. Slaughter*

Mr. and Mrs. White are the proud parents of 11 children—seven biological and four adopted, special needs children. In addition to raising their family, the Whites have been involved in local adoption promotion efforts for over 20 years. As heads of Children Awaiting Parents (CAP), a nationally-known group that publishes an annual directory of special needs children awaiting adoption, the Whites have proven that there is no such thing as an unadoptable child, just “unfound” families.

Mrs. White has also acted as recruitment coordinator for Monroe County’s adoptive parents, holding recruitment events and garnering press for children in need of loving homes. Because of their hard work and dedication, hundreds of children have found the love of a family.

**Barbara and Scott Williams***Rep. John M. McHugh*

Barbara and Scott Williams from Fulton, New York are in the process of trying to adopt two little girls, Josephine and Marie, from war-torn Sierra Leone. Wanting to replace the children's memories of war and hate with ones of love and hope, the Williams have remained dedicated to completing the adoption as quickly as possible.

Josephine is an eight-month-old that has had both of her hands cut off by rebel soldiers. The fact that she is alive is simply a miracle. Because of the love shown by the Williams family, Josephine and Marie have the chance to begin a new life here in the U.S.

**Alan M. Wishnoff and Lisa Smith***Rep. Thomas Reynolds*

Alan and Lisa are both accomplished lawyers who served in the Baby Jarrett case in 1995. Baby Jarrett was born on April 6, 1995. The following day, his unwed birth mother placed him for adoption with two loving parents, Karen and Dennis. Several weeks later, the birth mother revoked her consent to the adoption, due to pressure from the birth father, who was prosecuted for abusing her during pregnancy. Concerned that the child's best interests would not be served, Alan and Lisa agreed to help Karen and Dennis fight for the right to raise Baby Jarrett.

After spending a combined 2,200 hours on the case, Alan and Lisa were successful in convincing the court that it was in Jarrett's best interest to be adopted by Karen and Dennis. Their work on this pro bono litigation has enhanced the human dignity of Jarrett and all adopted children by helping to ensure that their rights are heard and their interests protected. By successfully advocating that Baby Jarrett, now five years old, remain in his safe, loving home with the only parents he has ever known, their work has also assuaged the fear and reluctance felt by prospective adoptive parents in the wake of the Baby Jessica and Baby Richard cases.

*North Dakota***Tammy and Jared Gasal and Family***Rep. Earl Pomeroy*

In response to the adoption crisis in Vietnam, the Gasal family volunteered to open their home to their daughter, Talexi. Despite the fact that Tammy's father's service in the war left some painful memories, they courageously decided that bringing Talexi home to North Dakota was the right thing to do. As with many adoptions from Vietnam, the Gasal's act of love demonstrates that even amidst tragedy there is love. The openness of their family and commitment to providing a loving home for an orphan child is an inspiration to us all.

*Ohio***Mary Malloy***Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich*

Ms. Malloy runs the Cuyahoga County Bar Association's Custody Mediation Project at the Count Juvenile Court. In cases where all parties are agreeable to mediation, the specially trained mediators attempt to reach a permanency plan that suits the child's best interest. The program is highly effective in reuniting families when possible, and most importantly, it allows the child's future to be determined in a safe and efficient manner.

However, in many cases reunification is not possible. In such cases, Ms. Malloy and the Custody Mediation Project are able to develop permanent placement through adoption. The Custody Mediation Project has been effective in shortening the time period children must wait before their adoptions are completed. The project has also been effective at using mediation as an alternative dispute resolution method in custody and adoption cases. Without a doubt, it is the commitment and skills that Ms. Malloy brings to this program that make it all that it is.

### ***Theodore and Lillian Mason***

*Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones*

Theodore and Lillian Mason have raised four children, two of whom were adopted. The Masons' two adopted children were from troubled backgrounds and are now productive adults. All four of these children have graduated from college—one is a Medical Doctor, one is a lawyer, and two are teachers. In addition to these four children, the Masons also raised two cousins when their mother died, and they have taken in three foster children.

The Masons are living proof of the undeniable impact growing up in a loving family has on a child. They are a loving example not only for their children, but also for the community at large.

### ***Faith and Marvin Smith***

*Sen. Mike DeWine*

The Smiths are adoptive parents of five children. In December of 1999, the Smiths adopted a 17-year-old girl who had been in foster care for over half of her life. On December 22, 1999, SharDina officially became Dyna Smith, and for the first time in a long time, she knew what it meant to belong.

Dyna is living proof that a child is never too old to need a family. For all the children this couple has touched, but especially for a scared and nervous 17-year-old, Faith and Marvin Smith are truly *Angels in Adoption*.

## *Oklahoma*

### ***Jerry and Denise Dillon***

*Sen. Don Nickles*

Jerry and Denise Dillon are the founders of Dillon Adoption Agency, the first international adoption agency in Oklahoma. Since 1972, they have placed over 4,500 children in homes in the United States. For 28 years, Denise and Jerry Dillon have worked tirelessly to provide a better life for children in orphanages in South Korea, India, Haiti, China, Russia, Ukraine and Vietnam by providing food, medicine, clothing and school supplies. In addition, they provide ongoing services and support in the U.S. for adoptive families and children, heritage education camps and cultural workshops.

The difference the Dillons have made in the lives of children throughout the world is indescribable. The love and joy they have brought to thousands of families through their work is to be commended. Because of them, we are one step closer to the day when no child is left without a home of their own.

### ***Debbie Espinosa***

*Sen. James M. Inhofe*

Ms. Espinosa has served as the director for Deaconess Home Crisis Pregnancy-Adoption Services for over two years. As director, Ms. Espinosa works tirelessly to help and counsel adopting families, birth mothers and children. Each day, she and her staff work to ensure that children are placed in homes where they will be cherished and protected.

*(continued)*

At a time when they need advice and support, Ms. Espinosa shows confused and frightened pregnant teens that they are loved. Ms. Espinosa dedicates her time, talent, and heart to help find loving homes for all children. Because of her, children who might otherwise be left to die alone grow up in loving homes.

## *Oregon*

### **Judith Spargo**

*Rep. Greg Walden*

Judith is known for her compassion and unselfish caring for those who cannot easily care for themselves. If one were seeking a term to describe her, *angel* would certainly be high on the list. She is what we have come to expect of angels. She is a caring guardian, a completely unselfish person and is always there to help others.

Judith has been very effective in her service to children with her kind heart, innate ability, and acute sense of what is right. In her role as a court appointed special advocate, she has been actively involved in facilitating the adoption of abused children to loving, caring, permanent homes. Those who know Judith comment not only on her unselfish compassion, but also on her ability to make the right things happen for children. As a person who considers the results she achieves as reward enough for her tireless efforts, she has made a difference in the lives of every child her life has touched.

## *Pennsylvania*

### **Barbara Schoener**

*Rep. Robert A. Borski*

Two and half years ago, Barbara Schoener adopted a little girl from Russia and her life changed tremendously. Although she was overjoyed to be a mom to her daughter, Meghan, she was also horrified by the memories of the conditions of the orphanages where her daughter once resided and many children remain. This inspired her to join the Families of Russian and Ukrainian Adoptions (FRUA).

Barbara's passion and commitment led her to become the president of FRUA's Pennsylvania chapter. She has championed numerous fund raisers, raising significant amounts for essentials such as vitamins and stethoscopes, medications and supplies to aid Eastern European orphans. Barbara is an extraordinary human being who has tirelessly fought to better the lives of children.

## *Rhode Island*

### **Dennis B. Langley**

*Rep. Bob Weygand*

Mr. Langley has been an adoption advocate for over 15 years. He works tirelessly to reach individuals where they live, work, play and worship to become more pro-active in helping to find homes for children.

Serving as the Urban League of Rhode Island's Deputy and then Executive Director for 15 years, he has worked tirelessly to keep the Minority Recruitment & Child Placement Program thriving. Since the inception of this program, over 100 families and individuals have been trained and certified for adoption. All of these services were provided at no cost to the families. Mr. Langley has offered assistance for home expansion/improvement to accommodate the adoptive children, clothing allowances, food and other necessities to help fill the gap left by federal and state subsidies. Mr. Langley has often said, "Every child should have the right to a permanent family where loving care, a sense of security and support are provided."

## *South Carolina*

### **Brenda and Anthony Davis**

*Rep. James E. Clyburn*

Brenda and Tony Davis answered a call for help that was voiced by the State of South Carolina. In an attempt to find permanent homes for children in the foster care system, South Carolina asked its citizens to consider becoming involved in the "Seedling Program". This program was designed to match prospective parents with children that were considered "hard to place". Brenda and Tony heeded the call and became actively involved. From the moment they began to interact with Andrew and Andre, they knew that they wanted to become parents to these little boys. Andre and Andrew showed many signs of being a part of the system. They were academically and emotionally scarred. Few couples wanted the challenge of twins.

Unfortunately, as with many new programs, the "Seedling Program" had major flaws. Mr. and Mrs. Davis endured countless postponements and changes in rules and regulations before they were able to finally adopt. Through it all, they remained close to the children and continued to love and reassure them. Today, they are the proud parents of Andrew and Andre, and with love and patience, their family is bonding. Additionally, the Davis family now includes a little daughter born just over a year ago. Andre and Andrew simply dote on their little sister.

### **Peggy Ewing**

*Rep. Jim DeMint*

Peggy Ewing and her husband, Robert, are *Angels* in the world of international adoption. They have nine children. Four of their children are theirs through birth, and five of their children joined their family through international adoption. Proof that love knows no bounds, the Ewing's five internationally adopted children are each from a different country: Cambodia, Korea, El Salvador, Romania, Russia and Morocco.

Peggy has been an advocate of adoption since 1978 and started her own agency in 1995, specializing in international adoptions. She works tirelessly to help couples through the complex process of international adoption. There have been many nights when she stayed at the office all night long to take calls from parents from the other side of the world. She works without pay and has helped to find loving American homes for hundreds of orphans from all over the world.

### **Tomilee Harding**

*Sen. Ernest F. Hollings*

Mrs. Harding is the founder of Christian World Adoption Agency, the third largest in the U.S. Inspired by her faith, Ms. Harding has dedicated her life and the work of the agency to assisting disadvantaged orphans with and without medical condition complications in being adopted in the U.S.

As an adoptive mother, she knows first hand the emotions experienced by the parents who come to her for help.

She has been an active advocate for adoption rights. In her recent testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, she urged Congress to ratify the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption because she felt it would help protect the rights of the children and families she represents. In addition to her work with C.W.A., Tomilee served for several years as the President of Joint Council on International Children's Services, an alliance of agencies who perform international adoptions.

**William Brantley Hart***Rep. Lindsey O. Graham*

William Hart is the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Thornwell Home for Children in Clinton. He adopted two children of his own, one of whom died in early childhood. A native of Anderson, William and his family have worked tirelessly over the years through the Thornwell Home for Children.

Even while living in Atlanta during his entire professional career, he maintained his interest in Thornwell. He has held nearly every office there, been on every committee, and headed up every effort. Also, while in Atlanta, he directed three counties in metro Atlanta for the United Way agencies that directly contribute to services for children.

*South Dakota***Jeanine Jones and Andy Browles***Sen. Tim Johnson*

Jeanine and Andy have adopted five special needs children, three girls and two boys, between the ages of 11–16. Previously, Jeanine owned a private adoption agency. Jeanine and Andy consider these five children their *Angels in Adoption*.

**Dale and Arlene Decker***Sen. Tim Johnson*

Over the years, Dale and Arlene have dedicated themselves to caring for children with special needs. Believing that nothing can help a child like the security which comes from belonging to a permanent family, the Deckers decided to adopt seven special needs children. After a brief life filled with love, two of the children have passed away. Of the remaining children, three boys are in wheelchairs, one girl is blind, and the other girl is autistic.

Although there are times when their care can be both expensive and exhausting, Dale and Arlene remain committed to giving their children the best home they could ever ask for. Knowing that their time on earth may be brief, they do all they can to show each of the children that they are uniquely special and worthy of love.

**Jeannie French***Sen. Tim Johnson*

Jeannie French is the proud single mother of two boys, Nicholas John and Jamison “Jamie” John, both of whom were born in Vietnam. When Jeannie adopted Nicholas, age 6, she learned that there are almost twice as many boys as girls awaiting adoption in Vietnam. She considered this when she decided to adopt her second child, Jamie, age 3.

When she welcomed Jamie into her home in 1997, she “wanted to bring all of the children from Hanoi back with her.” Instead, she expects that if the Hope for Children Act passes, she will adopt again; although on a teacher’s salary, it may be difficult to open her home to another child.

On a personal note, Jeannie was able to meet Jamie’s biological mother, who loves him very much and was very grateful to Jeannie for caring for him.

**Mark Kelsey and Calla Hogue***Sen. Tom Daschle*

Mark and Calla are the proud parents of three children, one of whom was adopted from China. Their eldest daughter, Quinn, is 14 years old and their son, Austin, is 12. In 1997, they adopted Jae Ci Lynn Kelsey. She was born in China and came to live with the Kelsey-Hogy family when she was 10 months old, and she is now 3 1/2.

Despite the fact that the entire adoption process took two years, the Kelsey-Hogue family never gave up the hope that Jae would be a part of their family. When asked, Mark and Calla said they knew in their hearts that they were meant to be adoptive parents. Almost assuredly, Jae agrees with her parents in that sentiment. Each day, they do their best to provide set an example and provide a loving home for their family.

**Jon and Laurie LeBar***Sen. Tim Johnson*

Jon and Laurie are the proud parents of three biological children. They decided to provide foster care for other children and told local adoption officials that if there were ever any other children who needed permanent placement to let them know. In time, they adopted three children and, three years later, they adopted two more. Before long, they had 12 adopted children along with their three biological children. Their children are Hispanic, African American and bi-racial.

When asked about having a bi-racial family, Laurie explained that the LeBars had fallen in love with their first bi-racial child and wanted to adopt another African American child. Although most people would think that having so many children would be stressful and chaotic, Laurie says all of her children help each other, and they all get along on most occasions.

Recently, Laurie was accepted into the Adopt America Network, an organization which assists in placing special needs children and older children, as well as sibling groups. The LeBars will not be able to attend the awards presentation; they are proud to say that they are awaiting the arrival of their sixteenth child from Texas.

**Judge Merton B. Tice, Jr.***Rep. John Thune*

Judge Merton Tice has been involved with child adoption and troubled youth for nearly 20 years. As a circuit court judge for the Seventh Judicial District of South Dakota, Judge Tice has made the people of his home state acutely aware of the needs and problems unique to children "trapped in the system." Outside of his official capacity, he is involved with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program and mentors children.

Both on and off the bench, Judge Tice provides a tremendous example to all who are involved in the child welfare system. Through his dedication to the children he serves, he has made it possible for children to have a second chance at the life they deserve.

## Texas

### **Kathleen Foster**

*Rep. Tom DeLay*

In December 1982, Kathleen Foster co-founded Casa de Esperanza de los Ninos, Inc.—the House of Hope for Children—in Houston, Texas. Funded entirely by private support, Casa de Esperanza is recognized as a national model for community-based outreach for children and families in crisis. Since 1988, Casa has placed over 100 special needs children in loving adoptive homes. In addition, Casa serves hundreds of children each year through its Residential Shelter Program and network of outreach programs.

It has been Kathleen Foster's dedication and vision that made Casa de Esperanza the respected institution it is today. In choosing to provide care and adoption services to the otherwise "unwanted" young members of her community, Kathleen has created a higher standard of local involvement and outreach. As a result, the people of Houston continually acknowledge her outstanding service to vulnerable and special needs children.

### **Tom and Mary Alice McCubbins**

*Sen. Bob Kerrey*

In 1995, the McCubbins, working with a therapeutic foster agency named Child Connect, volunteered to be foster parents for six siblings. They worked with the children's biological mother in a rehabilitation program with the shared hope that she might be able to care for her kids on her own one day. It became clear, however, that the children could not return to their biological mother.

The McCubbins knew in their hearts that with the love and support of a family these children would grow and flourish, and so they adopted five of the children in 1998. One of the children, Joseph, had neurofibromatosis, a severe condition from which his doctors did not expect recovery. Joseph was in the hospital with a kidney tumor in December 1998; and so, his adoption took place in his hospital room. Since that December day, Joseph has made a full recovery and all children continue to grow in a loving and stable family.

### **Armando and Lucy Valdes**

*Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee*

While working to repair water damage to their home, Armando and Lucy learned of the life story of brothers Ezekiel (Zeke), age 9, and Juan Luis (Honnie), age 8. With their father dead and their mother physically incapable of caring for them, the brothers had been languishing in foster care for three years. Although they had never met them, Armando and Lucy knew instantly that the boys belonged in their family.

After being approved to adopt Zeke and Johnnie in May 1990, the Valdes family received the call they had been so anxiously waiting. It was finally time to meet the boys in Harlingen, Texas. "Meeting them was one of the most exciting moments in my life," Armando says. "We spent several days swimming, shopping and just being together. My family was devoted to them, making sure Zeke and Johnnie were not scared, but eager to belong."

## Utah

### **Gerry Simmons**

*Rep. Jim Hansen*

Ms. Simmons has dedicated her life to caring for many children that were not born to her. As a foster parent, she and her late husband took in many children, several of whom had special needs, and provided them with a safe and loving home.

On limited means, Ms. Simmons eventually adopted children, giving them what they wished for most, a permanent family. As a loving parent, she taught all of her children the vital life lessons which have allowed them to become vibrant, productive adults they are today.

## Vermont

### **William M. Young**

*Sen. James M. Jeffords*

William Young, the commissioner of Social and Rehabilitation Services for the State of Vermont, has a strong commitment to the children under his watch. His demand for excellence in service to the children under his care has made possible the timely adoption of 734 children, who otherwise were at risk for remaining caught in the foster care drift. Commissioner Young is willing to make changes within a very complex organization in order to best meet the needs of Vermont's youngest and most vulnerable population.

Commissioner Young reads the adoption report of every child. For children with special needs, Commissioner Young signs an adoption assistance agreement to help families with post adoption services. When a family or child have had great difficulty because of the child's prior abuse history, Commissioner Young has authorized services to help ensure that the family gets the support they need to stay together.

Commissioner Young has used federal grants to build a consortium of private agencies to serve adoptive families. Those agencies provide support groups statewide for parents of challenging children, provide home behavioral intervention services, crisis intervention services, school liaison services and case management services families joined by adoption. For many families, these services have made it possible for them to adopt a child who would have remained in an institution. Commissioner Young's commitment to the children of Vermont has improved their quality of life and given them homes.

## Virginia

### **Cathy Harris**

*Rep. Virgil H. Goode, Jr.*

Cathy Harris has facilitated and supported many families adopting children from the Ukraine. A mother of five herself, Ms. Harris has helped dozens of families fulfill their dreams. Her efforts and experience benefit both families in the U.S. and children in the Ukraine.

In addition to helping to build these families, Cathy Harris provides them opportunities to share their experiences through the organization that she created, the Independent Ukrainian Adoptive Family Network (IUAFN). Ms. Harris is always willing to lend an ear or a shoulder, living by the IUAFN motto, "families helping families." She puts a complicated process at an understandable level, making adoptions possible where families might otherwise get lost in paperwork and international red tape.

Ms. Harris has provided invaluable support and assistance to the Guthrie family of Palmyra, Virginia, as they go through the process of adopting a Ukrainian child. Thanks to Ms. Harris, the Fifth District of Virginia hopes to welcome another young member to very soon.

**Brian and Kellie Meehan***Rep. James P. Moran*

Because of her personal experience as an adopted child, Kellie and her husband, Brian, have adopted two sons, Michael and Sean. In addition to making a warm and loving home for their children, Kellie and Brian have been tireless advocates for those children still dreaming of a family.

Kellie was Chairperson of the Alexandria Adoption Awareness Day, held on October 17, 1998 in Alexandria, Virginia. The purpose of this event was to increase community awareness of adoption and related issues, as well as to get information on adoption and foster care to people interested in participating in the process. The day included workshops on how to finance and pay for adoption, growing up adopted, domestic vs. international adoptions, private vs. agency adoptions, as well as speakers and various activities for children.

Brian and Kellie speak frequently to adoption support groups and waiting parent groups about being adopted, having adopted children, and the entire adoption process.

**Sandra F. Silvers***Rep. Bob Goodlatte*

Sandy Silvers has demonstrated her personal commitment to adoption by adopting a child, suffering from multiple cognitive and psychiatric impairments, who otherwise might have spent his entire childhood in the foster care system.

Sandy's son, Robert William, is now 10 years old. He continues to be multiply impaired, as he will be throughout his lifetime. He will, therefore, remain a challenge for Sandy—yet it is a challenge she accepts wholeheartedly. What is obvious is that she is committed to his having the opportunity he needs to experience the love and care that he deserves. Sandy has managed to provide an environment, in her home and in the community, which allows as much stability as possible for Robert William. Every day, Sandy Silvers proves that the best medicine for a child is the love and support of caring parent.

**WRIC TV 8 and United Methodist Family Services***Rep. Tom Bliley*

Currently 517 children with special needs in Virginia are in need of loving, adoptive families. To help children awaiting adoption, WRIC TV 8 and United Methodist Family Services have joined forces in an ongoing community service project called *A Child Waiting*. This weekly television series profiles children from around Virginia who are waiting for adoption.

Statistics from August 4, 1998, through August 1, 2000 show that 845 calls have been received for *A Child Waiting*. As a result of the weekly series, 451 of these calls have been from people interested in learning more about special needs adoption. The other 394 calls were for a specific child or sibling group shown, and 173 callers have inquired about foster care. To date, nine children have been adopted thanks to *A Child Waiting*.

## Washington

### **Ivan Day**

*Rep. George R. Netthercutt*

Ivan is not only an adoptive parent, but over the last 15 years he has been a foster parent for approximately 1,000 children. Although this number is staggering, what is more amazing is the positive impact on the lives of each of these children. Throughout his life, Ivan has done all that he can to ensure that the children in his care know what it means to be cherished.

Today, Ivan continues to be an outspoken and unyielding advocate for foster children and foster families. Whenever possible, he shares his experience as both an adoptive and foster parent. As a single man and a small business owner, he is living proof that one person can make a big difference.

### **Janice Neilson**

*Rep. Jennifer Dunn*

As Executive Director of the World Association for Children and Parents, Janice Neilson has been a leader in the effort to help families adopt children and improve the lives of children in orphanages around the world. Janice has traveled the world, seeking to find families for the children growing up in institutions. The World Association for Children and Parents has played a pivotal role in facilitating hundreds of adoptions for families in Washington state.

Since the organization's inception in 1976, WACAP has found parents for 7,000 children, over 500 of whom were abandoned Chinese children. Not only has Janice been the director of WACAP since 1983 and served on the Washington State Adoption Committee, she is the mother of four adopted children.

### **Jon and Kerri Steeb**

*Rep. Jack Metcalf*

After six years and great expense, the Steeb's knew they were meant to adopt. Early in the process, a friend encouraged them to consider private adoption. Within seven weeks they held their son, Jeremy, in their arms for the first time. Jeremy's only possession, was a stuffed Ewok he received as his special birth gift. Six years later they decided to expand their family. This time, things did not go as smoothly, and the birth mother changed her mind before the adoption could take place. Three weeks later, the agency called with another baby. Their three-week-old baby girl, Grace, was waiting with her birth gift—a stuffed Ewok.

Jeremy is now 16 and Grace is 10. The Steeb's have influenced other families to adopt precious children.

## West Virginia

### **Scott and Faith Merryman**

*Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV*

Scott and Faith have dedicated both their professional and personal lives to the advancement of people with disabilities. In addition to their careers, the Merrymans have six children and eight grandchildren. Two of their children, Richard and Hope, are adopted and their foster child, Charity Morgan, will be adopted next year.

Because of their love and support, their children have accomplished more than many might have thought possible. Richard is now 26 years old and has recently served on the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. He has Cerebral Palsy, lives on his own in an alternative living center and is an advocate for people with disabilities. Hope is now 19 years old and loves her job as an assistant manager for a restaurant. Charity Megan just turned 17 and has multiple disabilities, including blindness in one eye, cleft palate and seizure disorder. She is learning new words and enjoys sharing them with others.

## Wisconsin

### **Cheri Kainz**

*Rep. Tammy Baldwin*

Cheri and her husband, Dave, adopted their son, Justin, when he was 13 months old. When he was four years old, he was diagnosed with Bi-Polar Mood Disorder and Reactive Attachment Disorder. After going through treatments last year, Justin is beginning to overcome his emotional disorders. This experience inspired Cheri to help other families with children with similar disorders.

Cheri has demonstrated exceptional dedication and initiative in establishing the KAY (Kids And Youth) Foundation, a center where children with behavioral problems or mental illness can receive traditional and alternative treatments. KAY also offers services to the families of these children, offering support groups and parenting classes. Cheri has made a difference in the lives of the children she has helped, and she will continue to empower parents with the knowledge that they are not alone in the struggle to help their children lead normal lives.

### **Lisa Robertson**

*Sen. Herb Kohl*

Ms. Robertson has been instrumental in maintaining the Milwaukee Immigration Adoption Unit. Her commitment to prompt service has facilitated perspective adoptive parents with the requirements for foreign orphan petitions for adoption. It is only with the assistance of dedicated staff, such as Ms. Robertson, who are willing to go above and beyond the call of duty, that parents are able to receive immigration benefits from the INS.

## Wyoming

### **Ellen McGee**

*Sen. Mike Enzi*

Throughout her adult life, Ellen has actively promoted adoption, both personally and professionally. She and her husband, Mike, have 14 children—three are biological children and 11 are adopted. The diversity of her family demonstrates that the boundless love she has for children is not tempered by the color of their skin or by their physical capabilities. Her adopted children are Asian, African American and Caucasian, and most of them have special needs. Graced by her love and support, her children grow each day, one step closer to fulfilling their potential.

*To know that even one life has  
breathed easier because you have lived . . .  
that is to have succeeded.*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**



**Freddie Mac Foundation**

Helping to brighten our children's future

*This event is sponsored by the Freddie Mac Foundation.*